

2 September 1987
MLD-7032

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

FROM : Chief, FBIS London Bureau

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- London Bureau -- August 1987

I. GENERAL

1. London Bureau management and engineering met with BBCMS Deputy General Manager [redacted] project architect [redacted] and BBC engineering on 17 August to discuss bureau concerns over possible displacement during the planned roof renovation in late 1990/early 1991. FBIS received assurances that only the engineers and chief editor would be forced to relocate during this 6-month period and that other offices could remain safely in place with noise from overhead work being the only disruptive factor.
2. The bureau learned during the month that BBC automation, originally scheduled to be operational in June 1988, has now slipped to autumn or later. This will have an as-yet-undetermined impact on the timing of bureau consolidation. In another automation development, the bureau has received written assurances from BBCMS management that the VDU's and printers FBIS will be using when BBC does automate will have 24-hour BBC technical support and that BBC will have on hand adequate spares in the event of failure.
3. Islamabad: The new direct London-Islamabad satellite link, now operational for over a month, is providing more reliable service than the old line with the downlink in Karachi. Equipment problems at the unit, however, continue to affect the quality of the feeds and arrangements have been made for Austrian Bureau's regional engineer to visit the unit in September with a London TDY en route for talks with BBC engineers responsible for the line.

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II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. The traditional August lull in news was disrupted this year by the Mecca hajj incidents early in the month sparking off a significant amount of rhetoric from both Iranian and Saudi leaders. The bureau processed a total of nine Iranian leader speeches on the subject and three major Saudi utterances. In addition to this, the month ended with the resumption of the Gulf tanker war requiring extra editorial alertness given the heightened U.S. presence in the area.

2. In response to bureau complaints over slow BBC processing of Afghan leader speeches, the BBC has cut back on unproductive Afghan coverage and realigned its limited staffing to provide a Dari/Pashto monitor from 1200 GMT. Detailed Afghan requirements, compiled with AG assistance, were passed to the BBC during the month.

B. Communications

1. Internet: The Internet system moved a little closer to its planned configuration when Teleprove tested the orderwire on 25 August and graded it satisfactory. Paperwork allowing operational use of the orderwire is expected to be completed by early October.
2. A communications outage on both Mode I autodin circuits on 27 August revealed that the RUTLAAA/RUDOMKA Phase II altroute had not been updated to reflect the FBIS move to Reston. Headquarters, after being advised of this by the London commcenter, has taken corrective action. A second revelation coming from the outage involved the dedicated line interface with AFS and the need for correct TI information on format line two. The bureau is attempting to rectify this by obtaining reader hardware to provide automatic numbering when using the dedicated line.
3. The bureau's KG-84 installation project inched further toward completion when word was received that 30-day keying will be sufficient and that a second TSO for the bureau's other Autodin circuit has been requested. Installation is planned for the week of 14 September and cutover for the week of 21 September.

C. Lateral Services

A request from Comideastfor for analysis of an Iranian propoganda theme was passed to Analysis Group for action. The command was advised that the bureau is not staffed for such service.

D. Technical

The bureau-designed XINHUA header and text selector has been constructed, tested and installed. The microprocessor-controlled device, which provides text, automated generation of the XINHUA log and 2 hours of storage with automatic purging of the memory, will greatly simplify life for the editorial staff when covering XINHUA during outages in Okinawa. ✓

III. ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

1. The Embassy received Department of State approval on 21 August to implement new FSN wagescales retroactively to 5 July 1987. New FBN wagescales, based on the Embassy percentage increases, were faxed to Headquarters for approval on 28 August.
2. Bureau editor [] was promoted to GS 10/1 effective 2 August. STAT
3. Senior editor [] arrived PCS 13 August and junior editor [] departed for Headquarters PCS on 21 August. STAT
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4. The dependents of senior editor [] departed for Washington on advance PCS travel 28 August. [] will follow in October at the conclusion of his tour. STAT
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5. Cologne Unit: The unit's contract American clerk/typist resigned 14 August and will be temporarily replaced by an embassy employee working part-time for the unit until a permanent replacement can be found.

IV. VISITS

In what must be a record low, the bureau had only two TDY visitors during the month: [] en route to assume duties as deputy chief in Nicosia, on the 19th for substantive talks and [] an Office of Logistics careerist participating in the Federal Executive Women's Program, on the 18th for an administrative briefing and bureau tour. Business should pick up a bit in September, however, when twelve TDY'ers are scheduled to drop by for various purposes.

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Attachments

cc: Chief, Austria Bureau
Chief, Cologne Unit
Chief, Islamabad Unit
Chief, Okinawa Bureau